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# **Imagery Analysis Monthly Review**

**April 1980**

**Top Secret**

*IS MR 80-0031*

*May 1980*

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# Imagery Analysis Monthly Review

**April 1980**

This publication of the Office of Imagery Analysis contains substantive findings and analytical judgments that were derived principally from analysis of imagery. Although information from other sources of intelligence may be included for background, this publication does not reflect an all-source assessment and has not been formally coordinated within CIA. (U)

Comments and queries on the contents of this publication are welcomed. They should be directed to the analyst whose name and green line extension appear after each article. (U)

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### **Prelaunch Explosion of Soviet SL-3 Space Booster at Plesetsk**

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[redacted] the ser-  
vice towers at Pad B, Launch Site 1, Plesetsk Missile/  
Space Test Center, sustained severe damage.

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[redacted]  
space booster, which was to have placed an ELINT  
reconnaissance satellite in orbit, was about two and  
a half hours from lift-off and was probably being  
checked out and loaded with propellants when the  
explosion occurred. An area of ground extending  
more than 100 meters from the pad was affected by  
the blast.

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The severity of the damage at Pad B will require  
that the service towers be replaced rather than re-  
paired. While Pad B is out of service—at least a  
year—only two launch pads will be available at  
Plesetsk for launching SL-3, SL-4, and SL-6 boost-  
ers. These boosters have been launched during the  
past five years at the combined average rate of 40  
per year. Should such a high launch rate from Ples-  
etsk be maintained, the launch frequency per pad  
will have to be significantly increased. The Soviets  
could compensate for the loss of the launch pad by  
shifting some launches to the two pads at Tyuratam  
which are used for launching the SL-3, SL-4, and  
SL-6 boosters. (TSR)

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**Top Secret**RUFF [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]25X1  
25X1**Tracked Vehicle Chassis Production  
Plant Identified in Sverdlovsk, USSR**  
[REDACTED]

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Photographic analysis of the Sverdlovsk Electrical Equipment Plant Uralelektrotiyazhmash, USSR, indicates that at least a portion of the plant is involved in series production of tracked vehicles that may be self-propelled (SP) guns. If these vehicles are SP guns, this section of the plant may be part of the Sverdlovsk Combat Vehicle Plant 50, a facility identified [REDACTED] as a producer of SP artillery. Until now there has been no photographic evidence of the combat vehicle plant's precise location in Sverdlovsk. [REDACTED]

pears to be the final assembly building at the western end of the plant [REDACTED]

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Two types of chassis have been identified at the Sverdlovsk plant, one measuring 9 meters by 3 meters and the other 7 meters by 3 meters. The larger dimensions are approximately the same as those of the chassis of the 180/203-mm SP gun, and the shorter dimensions are those of the chassis of both the 152-mm SP howitzer M-1973 and the 240-mm SP mortar. We cannot identify a gun tube on either type of vehicle. However, it is not uncommon for large gun tubes to be removed from SP guns for shipment. [REDACTED]

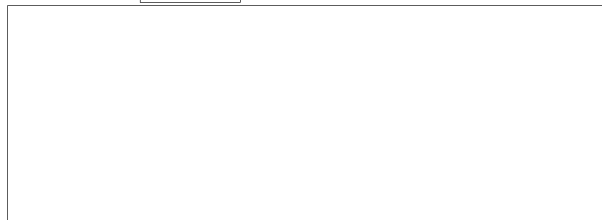
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A total of 95 tracked vehicles, all loaded on flat-cars, have been observed at this plant since tracked vehicles were first sighted there in October 1975. It seems likely that the vehicles are military products, since special security precautions have been taken to conceal them. All of those vehicles seen have been covered with canvas, and on all occasions except one they have been confined to a separately secured area. This secured area is next to what ap-



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[REDACTED]

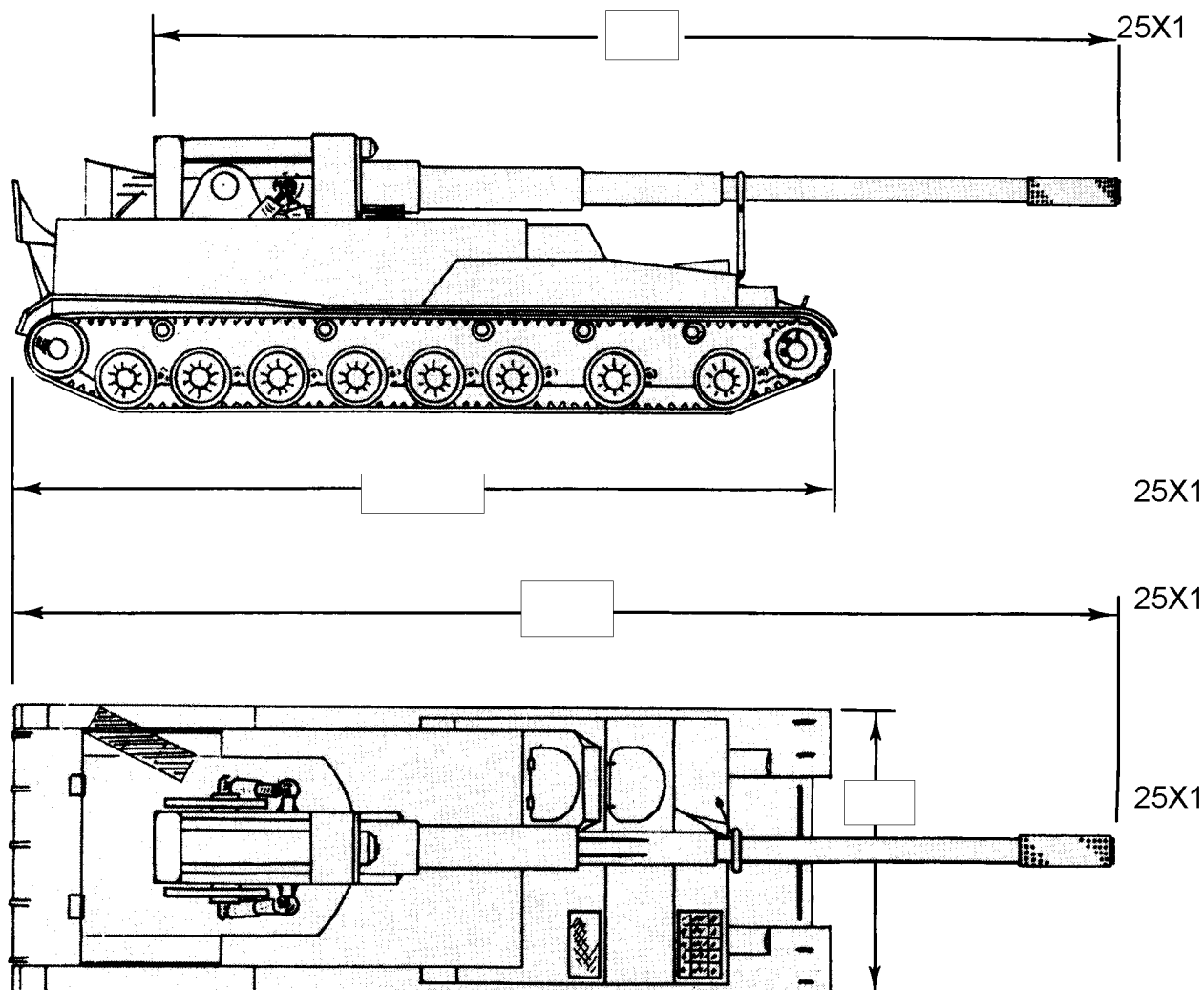
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**Conceptual Drawing of  
Soviet 180/203-mm SP Gun (TS R)**



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25X1**Magnetic-Levitation Research  
and Development Facility Identified  
Near Kiev, USSR** [REDACTED]

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Analysis of 1978 and 1979 satellite imagery reveals what appears to be a research and development site for magnetic-levitation transportation systems reported by the Soviet press to be located near Kiev. The facility has the test tracks necessary for magnetic levitation, which relies on a series of electro-magnets to suspend, move, and guide a vehicle above tracks. The tracks at the facility near Kiev are unlike those of any known Soviet railroad or subway and are similar to those at known magnetic-levitation centers—at Ramenskoye, near Moscow, and in Japan and West Germany. Magnetic-levitation systems are intended for passenger transportation at very high speeds—200 to 400 kilometers per hour. They require minimal electric power and do not create the noise, friction, and pollution which conventional tracked systems create. [REDACTED]

and was completed prior to June 1975. It is about 2,000 meters long and is set in an earthen roadbed with lattice work on each side. The other three tracks are elevated, as is the track at Ramenskoye. The other completed track, which may no longer be operational, is J shaped and is 350 meters long. The two completed tracks and one of the two under construction originate in engineering buildings, as does the track at Ramenskoye. [REDACTED]

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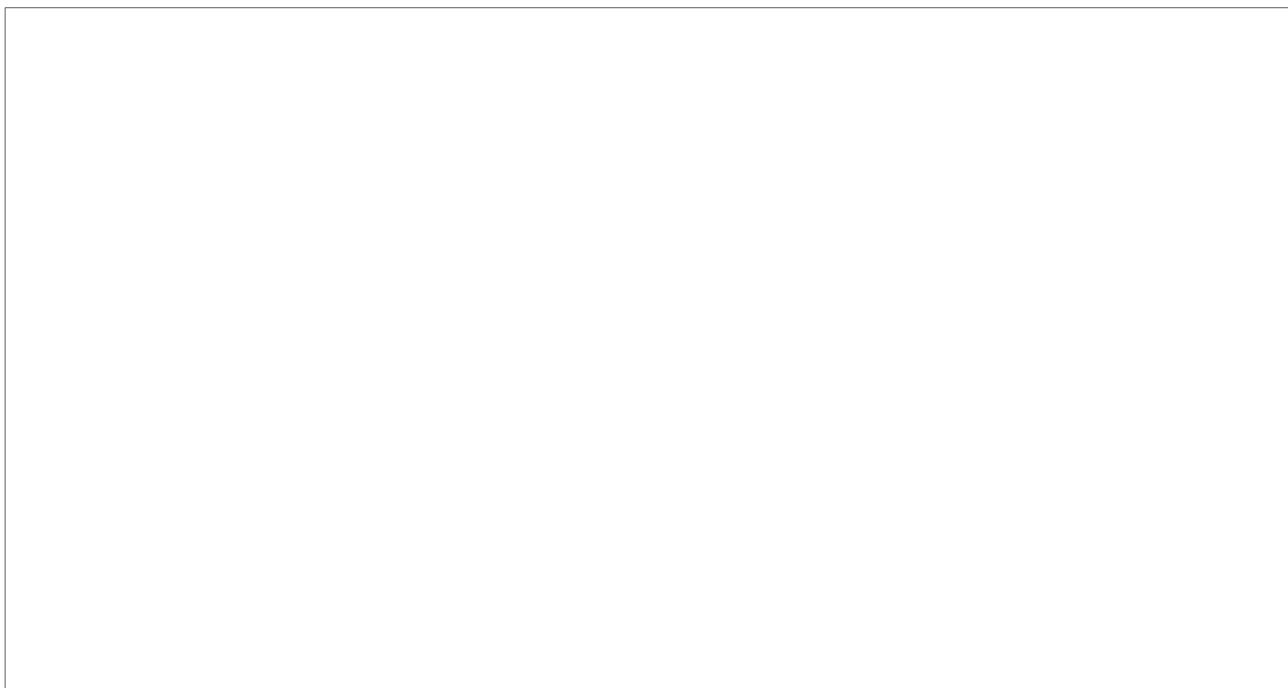
No test vehicles were discernible on the tracks at the Kiev facility on July 1978 and on April, May, and July 1979 imagery. However, what appeared to be two abandoned test vehicles and the frame of a third vehicle were present beside the J-shaped test track on all of the imagery studied. [REDACTED]

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Construction of the Kiev facility began sometime prior to May 1967. The facility consists of 15 major buildings and four test tracks, two completed and two under construction. Of the completed test tracks, the oldest was started in December 1972



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### Chinese Strengthen Their Defenses on the Paracel Islands

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Photography reveals that since the Sino-Vietnamese conflict in early 1979 the Chinese have upgraded their forces on the Paracel Islands. The Paracels are a group of about 15 islands in the South China Sea which the Chinese occupy but which are claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan, and the Philippines. The islands are in an area which may contain offshore oil deposits.

In the months immediately before and after China invaded Vietnam in February 1979, the Chinese deployed field artillery and anti-aircraft guns on the Paracels. Photography shows that in recent months at least 27 tanks and 34 radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns have been added to these defenses. Prior to late 1978, few weapons were seen on satellite photography of the islands. The Chinese have also recently expanded their network of defensive trenching, pillboxes, and small weapons positions on the islands, and the number of Chinese naval combatants seen in the area has increased slightly since the Sino-Vietnamese conflict.

and military presence in the Amphitrite Group of the Paracel Islands. They gained complete control of the islands when they took over the Crescent Group from the South Vietnamese forces there in early 1974. After the takeover, the Chinese gradually established permanent facilities in the Crescent Group and continued to expand their presence in the Amphitrite Group. On both groups of islands, the Chinese added housing and support buildings, wharfs, and air and coastal surveillance radars.

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Since 1978, the Vietnamese have publicly claimed the Paracels and denounced the Chinese occupation of them. This fact, along with an increase in Soviet naval and air traffic in the South China Sea, may have prompted China's military buildup on the islands.

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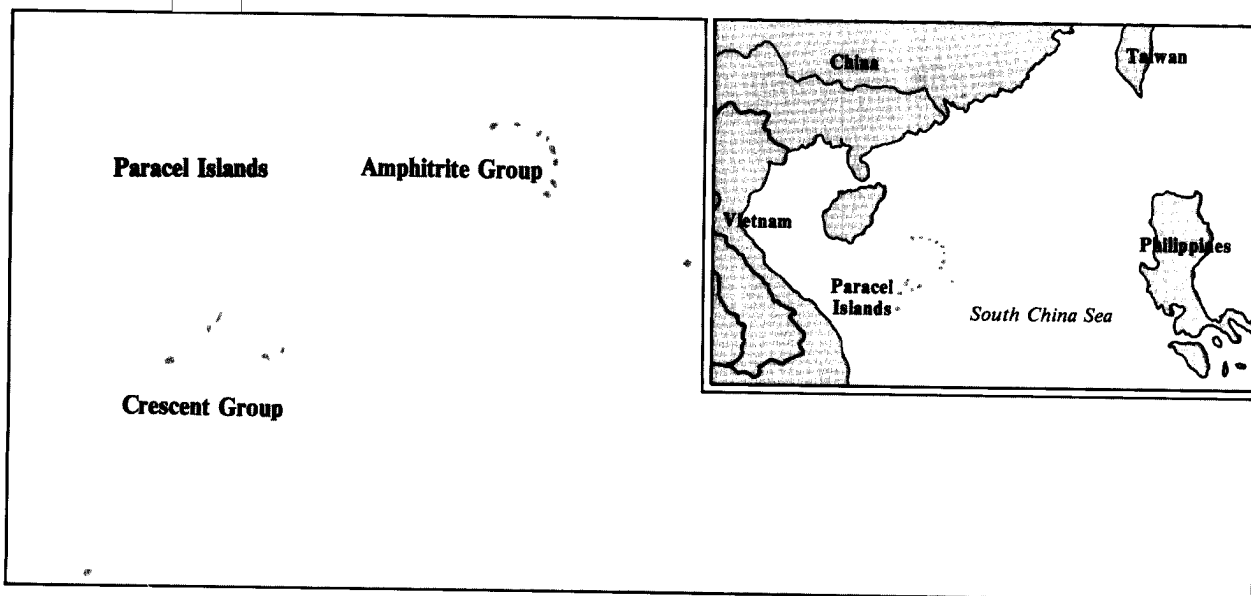
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The Chinese have long maintained a limited civilian

#### Locations of Paracel Islands

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25X1**Photography Reveals That  
Czechoslovakia Is Not Yet  
Producing T-72 Tanks** [REDACTED]

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Analysis of April 1980 imagery indicates that Czechoslovakia is still producing T-55 tanks, and not T-72s [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Since mid-1979, [REDACTED] open source literature have indicated that Czechoslovakia's only tank production plant—the Martin Armored Vehicle and Locomotive Plant, Turcianske—was to begin T-72 tank production by 1980. In addition, a [REDACTED] series production of T-72s had begun. Satellite photography of the Martin Plant in August 1979 showed no evidence of T-72 production, but no other coverage of the plant was acquired until the recent photography. [REDACTED] at least 15 T-55 tanks were seen at the plant, and [REDACTED] an additional nine T-55s were seen there. [REDACTED]

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Even if T-55 production at the Martin plant ceased immediately, it would not be likely that T-72 production would begin before late 1980. This estimate is based on observations of Soviet tank plants, where at least four months usually elapse between the time production of one type of tank ceases and production of another type begins. [REDACTED]

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The following reports have been published by the Office of Imagery Analysis since the last issue of the *Imagery Analysis Monthly Review*.

**Imagery Research Papers**

1. IS 80-10014K, [ ] *South African Coal Gasification-Liquefaction Facilities (SASOL)*, A 25X1  
1980 (Top Secret RUFF [ ]) 25X1
2. IS 80-10003K, [ ] *Photographic Indicators of Work Force Size at Soviet Civilian Enter-* 25X1  
*prises*, March 1980 (Top Secret RUFF [ ]) 25X1

**Imagery Analysis Memorandums**

1. IS 80-10053K, [ ] *Repair to the Damaged IGAT Gas Pipeline Near Saveh, Iran* (Top 25X1  
Secret RUFF) 25X1
2. IS 80-10056K, [ ] *Activity Levels at Iran's Major Commercial Ports and Inland Border* 25X1  
*Crossings* (Top Secret RUFF) 25X1
3. IS 80-10052, *Oilfield Development Near Panshan (Pan-shan), China* (Secret [ ]) 25X1
4. IS 80-10055, *Oilfield Development Near Shenyang, China* (Secret [ ]) 25X1
- [ ] 25X1
6. IS 80-10073J, [ ] *Unit Analysis of the 42nd Army, Guangzhou Military Region, China* 25X1  
(Top Secret RUFF [ ]) 25X1
7. IS 80-10045K, [ ] *Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) Guerrilla* 25X1  
*Camps in Mozambique* (Top Secret RUFF [ ]) 25X1
8. IS 80-10058K, [ ] *An-26 Transport Aircraft Activity in Cuba* (Top Secret RUFF) 25X1
9. IS 80-10066K, [ ] *Expansion of Production Facilities at Soviet Tank Plants—1979* (Top 25X1  
Secret RUFF) 25X1
10. IS 80-10038K, [ ] *Type III G Silo Modification at Derazhnya and Pervomaysk ICBM* 25X1  
*Complexes* (Top Secret RUFF [ ]) 25X1
11. IS 80-10049J, [ ] *Construction of Major Fabrication/Final Assembly Buildings at Select* 25X1  
*Soviet Missile Production Plants* (Top Secret RUFF [ ]) 25X1  
[ ] 25X1
12. IS 80-10060K, [ ] *Possible Space-Related Production at the Moscow Scientific Research* 25X1  
*Institute for Radio Communications* (Top Secret RUFF [ ]) 25X1

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13. IS 80-10063JX [ ] *Search for Spacecraft Assembly Plant, Plant Vympel, Moscow* (Top Secret RUFF [ ])

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16. IS 80-10059J [ ] *Analysis of All Transport Aircraft With Missile Seeker Nose Extensions and Other Types of Nose Modifications* (Top Secret RUFF [ ])

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18. IS 80-10070K [ ] *Comparison of ADV-1 and LA-17 Launch-Related Activity at Complex D, Kapustin Yar with FAD-83 and VA-04 Telemetry* (Top Secret RUFF [ ])

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[REDACTED]

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